

CIA Grounds N. Viet-Nam Airlift

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By Beverly Deepe

Meridian Tribune News Service

SAIGON, Aug 8—The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency canceled in mid-July its part of a multi-million-dollar contract with a private American aviation company that had the undercover mission of airlifting guerrillas and supplies behind enemy lines in North Viet-Nam and Communist-held sections of Laos.

Reliable military sources said that pilots of more than 12 aircraft included Chinese and Turkish nationals, but no Americans. American civilians were used for ground support, administrative and maintenance functions.

The American Government, through the CIA, about two years ago had signed jointly with the Vietnamese government a contract with a private

American firm called American Aviation Investors, Inc. The CIA broke the contract several weeks ago.

Viewed as Rebuke

The cancellation of the American co-signature was interpreted here as a rebuke to South Vietnamese Premier Gen. Nguyen Khanh, who has in recent weeks launched a "go north" campaign to attack Communist North Viet-Nam.

Gen. Khanh's campaign contradicted U.S. policy at the time. Presumably the American Government broke the contract in order to limit his capacity to send Vietnamese special forces guerrillas and saboteurs in North Viet-Nam and Laos.

Since cancellation of the contract, Gen. Khanh has toned down and redefined his "go north" policy to mean simply a means of finishing the war "instead of letting it drag on." And since then, North Vietnamese PT boats have twice attacked U.S. destroyers in international waters off the coast of North Viet-Nam.

The CIA contract with American Aviation Investors, Inc., called for a highly mobile undercover air operation involving several helicopters, six to eight C-45 and C-47 transport aircraft, and L-28 courier planes. None of the silver-colored aircraft carried identification markings or insignia, except black numbers.

Other American private aviation companies with missions comparable to American Aviation Investors are presumably still in operation. The American Government at times contracts with private firms to implement programs for which the U.S. Government officially cannot be held responsible.

Data Fragmentary

Information concerning the droppings of South Vietnamese guerrillas, agents and sab-

oteurs behind enemy lines is fragmentary, since it is not the official policy of the U.S. or the South Vietnamese government. However, such activities are known to have been launched in the past and are continuing.

Wives of South Vietnamese special forces troops sent to North Viet-Nam sometimes inadvertently drop information. The wives call the mission into North Viet-Nam an "express train to death." Casualties are considered high, although one Vietnamese special forces officer has been dropped into Communist-held sections of southern Laos six times and has fought his way back to safety.

Within the past six weeks, reliable Vietnamese sources confirmed that a South Vietnamese special forces unit

landed on the South China Sea coast near the North Vietnamese city of Dong Hoi, about 30 miles north of the 17th parallel separating North and South Viet-Nam. They succeeded in sabotaging the city water system.

The most detailed information regarding South Vietnamese saboteurs and guerrillas operating in North Viet-Nam comes from North Vietnamese radio broadcasts and newspapers, but the accuracy of the information is difficult to assess. The North Vietnamese government last year published a thin white book listing all such activities.

On April 22, 1964, the North Vietnamese government reported a "spy trial" in which a Communist military court two days earlier tried a group of seven "spy-commandos of the

U.S. and its henchmen in South Viet-Nam who had been air-dropped on a mountain region of Cam Xuyen district, Ha Tinh Province." The North Vietnamese report listed names and ages of the seven "spies" and their sentences which ranged from three years to life imprisonment.

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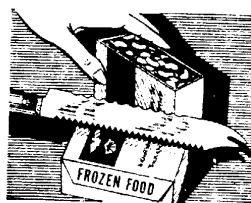
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Demand Buddhists

ing roids on North Vietnamese naval bases this week provided a big moral boost for the people of South Viet-Nam.

Taylor dismissed any suggestion that Khanh was attempting to provoke a wider conflict with his calls for a "march North." He added that there has been a marked improvement in the military situation here.

Military sources said today Communists Viet Cong guerrillas have been laying low since U.S. attacks on North Viet-Nam. Viet Cong guerrillas still prevented search parties from reaching its B-37 that crashed Thursday near Bien Hoa.

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